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E. Friedheim

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Dr. Joshua Lederberg
President
The Rockefeller University

Dear Joshua,

Thank you very much for asking the Development Department to make contacts with the view to the development of compounds synthesized in this laboratory.

In the meantime, I have contacted myself The Wellcome Foundation and Ciba Geigy, both companies have manifested interest in the Pneumocystocidal and Acanthamoebocidal compounds and have concluded secrecy agreements with me.

I met recently in Basel with the Ciba people and discussed my findings with them. They are eager to examine the compounds in their laboratories and I have provided them with the necessary material. I am satisfied with the situation because I know how thorough the investigations are and I know their capacity of developments and, if it comes to it, of marketing. Furthermore, I have personal friendly relations with Ciba Geigy. I confirmed to Ciba Geigy that to date I have not made disclosures to other companies. I consider that it is in the best interest of all concerned to keep it this way. Under the circumstances I have not yet made disclosures to Wellcome.

The bottleneck of evaluating Pneumocystocidal compounds is the difficulty to produce an animal model. The current procedure is to apply immunodepressants to rats over 5 to 6 weeks in the hope that they will develop a Pneumocystis pneumonia. The results are irregular, so that large numbers of animals are required. NIH, Sloan Kettering, the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Cincinnati and others have routine set-ups for this procedure, supported by large grants. In spite of my efforts I have been unable to have these institutions include my compounds in their screening. I have started to immunosuppress 75 rats at LARC four-and-a-half weeks ago.

The in vitro testing of nine compounds performed in collaboration with Dr. Marilyn Bartlett, Department of Pathology, Division of Clinical Microbiology, Indiana University Medical Center, Indianapolis, is terminated and showed three compounds to be significantly more active than pentamidine, the most active compound currently used.

Active compounds contain arsenic, antimony and bismuth. Interestingly this dampened in no way the interest of Ciba Geigy. Unaffected by current trends, they stated that what counts is the differential between toxic and curative doses, and that, particularly in an AIDS-related condition, the category of chemicals involved is of minor importance.

Decisions concerning my grant applications to NIH and the American Foundation for AIDS Research are due next month. A member of the NIH administration offered his intervention to accelerate the review of my grant application. To no avail. I would certainly appreciate efforts of Development to obtain funds for my investigations, without ties.

Very Sincerely Yours,

E. Friedheim